6. (Amended) An apparatus comprising:

an interface adapted to:

receive a request from a computer system for identification of the apparatus, and

furnish a hash value that identifies the apparatus to the computer system; and

a processor coupled to the interface and adapted to:

encrypt a processor number that identifies the processor [apparatus] with a key associated with the computer system to produce the hash value.

10. (Amended) An article comprising a storage medium readable by a first processor-based system, the storage medium storing instructions to cause a processor to:

receive a key from another processor-based system for identifying said another processor-based system,

determine whether the key is valid,

based on the identification, selectively authorize encryption of an identifier that identifies the first system with the key to produce a hash value.

21. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the processor number identifies a microprocessor of the second computer system.

23. (Amended) The computer system of claim 6, wherein the processor number identifies a microprocessor of the apparatus.

Add the following new claims:

27. (New) A method comprising:

providing a request to a second computer system for the second computer system to provide an identification of the second computer system;

receiving a hash value from the second computer system, the hash value being generated by encryption of a key associated with the first computer system with an identifier that identifies the second computer system; and

using the hash value to identify information associated with a user of the second computer system, the information being stored in a database maintained by the first computer system.

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28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the identifier that identifies the second computer system comprises a processor number.

29. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the key indicates an address of a web site of the first computer system.

30. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the first computer system is located at a remote location relative to the second computer system.

31. (New) An article comprising a storage medium readable by a first processor-based system, the storage medium storing instructions to cause a processor of the first processor-based computer system to:

provide a request to a second computer system for the second computer system to provide an identification of the second computer system;

receive a hash value from the second computer system, the hash value being generated by encryption of a key associated with the first computer system with an identifier that identifies the second computer system; and

using the hash value to identify information associated with a user of the second computer system, the information being stored in a database maintained by the first computer system.

32. (New) The article of claim 31, wherein the identifier that identifies the second computer system comprises a processor number.

33. (New) The article of claim 31, wherein the key indicates an address of a web site of the first computer system.

34. (New) The article of claim 31, wherein the first computer system is located at a remote location relative to the second computer system.

35. (New) A system comprising:
a database; and
a first computer coupled to the database to:

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provide a request to a second computer for the second computer to provide an identification of the second computer,

receive a hash value from the second computer, the hash value being generated by encryption of a key associated with the first computer with an identifier that identifies the second computer, and

use the hash value to identify information associated with a user of the second computer, the information being stored in the database.

36. (New) The system of claim 35, wherein the identifier that identifies the second computer comprises a processor number.

37.
36. (New) The system of claim 35, wherein the key indicates an address of a web site of the first computer.

38.
37. (New) The system of claim 35, wherein the first computer is located at a remote location relative to the second computer.